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FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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WHOOPING CRANES' WINTERING GROUNDS DESCRIBED

The winter home of North America's rarest migratory birds, the whooping cranes, is described in a new booklet titled Aransas--A National Wildlife Refuge, issued recently by the Fish and Wildlife Service.

A Texas peninsula jutting out into the Gulf of Mexico, Aransas is singularly attractive to the giant "whoopers" and other wild creatures seeking special habitat, according to the 11-page publication written by Julian A. Howard, manager of the refuge, and illustrated by Bob Hines of the Service's central office.

The booklet reveals that wild ducks, geese, sandhill cranes, shorebirds, turkeys, quail, deer, peccaries, and armadillos are accommodated at Aransas, along with the renowned whooping cranes.

The sole surviving flock of whoopers, now wintering at Aransas, numbers 21 birds. During the course of an average year, the refuge is host to about 100,000 ducks and geese--with 15 species represented, 1,000 sandhill cranes, and 38 kinds of shorebirds. In addition 350 wild turkeys, several hundred quail, 2,000 deer, and small numbers of the unique peccaries and armadillos are accommodated. Nearly 300 species of birds, in all, have inhabited the sanctuary at one time or another.

The Fish and Wildlife Service administers 272 national wildlife refuges in continental United States, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and Alaska. These sanctuaries cover an aggregate of approximately 17,409,968 acres where migratory waterfowl, rare wildlife species, and other wild creatures are protected from depletion of numbers and species extinction. The refuges are managed on a multiple-use basis wherever this can be accomplished without defeating the primary purpose for which each was established.

Copies of Aransas--A National Wildlife Refuge, designated also as Number 11 in the Service's Conservation in Action series, may be purchased from the Superintendent of Documents, United States Government Printing Office, Washington 25, D. C. The price is 15¢ per copy.

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